

# Luna Park--A Modern Amusement Wonder



JAPANESE TEA GARDENS IN THE BABYLONIAN HANGING GARDENS AT LUNA PARK.



CIRCUS MAXIMUS AT LUNA PARK--THREE-RING MID AIR ARENA WHERE THE PERFORMANCE IS FREE.

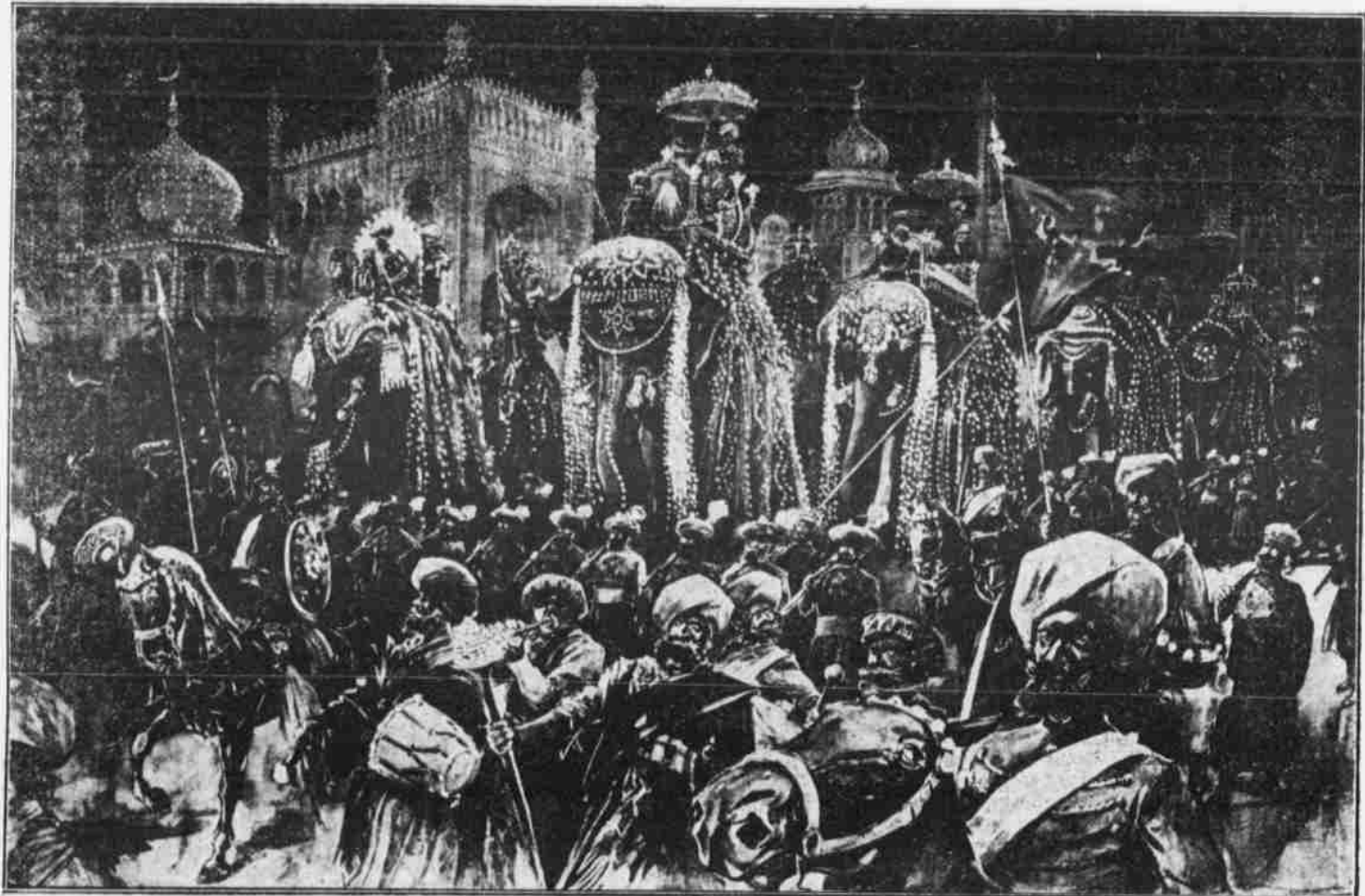
**W**HEN one contemplates the greatness to which Luna park, the wonderful amusement place on Coney Island, New York Harbor, the thought is natural, "Where would Luna Park be if the Transmississippi exposition had never been held in Omaha?" Before that event E. S. Dundy, Jr., was busy with his clerical duties and Frank Thompson was doing well as an architect, and neither had ever shown any inclination to enter the show business in any of its various branches. When the Omaha exposition was opened in 1893 "Skip" Dundy came to the front as owner of the "shoot the chutes" concession, and later he acquired an interest in the giant seesaw. This wasn't an extensive plunge, but it was enough to give him the fever. His balance at the close of the exposition was rather on the red ink side of the ledger, but he was out to get even, and followed Omaha with an undertaking at Buffalo, having Mr. Thompson for a partner.

Thompson & Dundy were architects and builders and did most of the building on the Omaha midway. One of the buildings they put up was never paid for by the original concessionaire, who got off bad from the very first, and was forced to close up before the exposition had been running six weeks. Thompson & Dundy took the building and rented it to another concessionaire, who also scored a failure. In order to get their money out the architects put in a show of their own. They didn't even know what to call it at the start and wavered for some time between two names, "Heaven and Hell" or "Darkness and Dawn." Finally, out of deference to the proprietors, it was decided to call the exhibition "Darkness and Dawn," and by that strange perversity that has always marked the action of hoodlums, the enterprise was successful from the start. From the opening to closing time each day the place was thronged and when the exposition closed Thompson & Dundy found themselves with a very handsome balance on the right side. With Thompson's success and Dundy's grit, the partners went to Buffalo, and there did well on the midway. While the Pan-American exposition was in progress Greater New York was explored, and this adventurous pair decided that the Knickerbockers were about ripe for the springing of something new and novel in the line of amusement enterprises.

Luna park, on Coney Island, was the result of the deliberations of this pair of planners, and it was a winner from the start. New York had never seen anything like it, and that is a polite way of saying that it was something new under the sun. It was bigger than anything in the world last summer, and will now be bigger than itself this summer.

Last year Luna park changed the entire character of Coney Island and Messrs. Thompson & Dundy have been accredited as the actual regenerators of that widely advertised resort. This year Luna park with its great and many improvements bids fair to supersede and completely absorb even the name of Coney Island.

Saturday, May 14, is the day set for the formal opening of Luna park for the season of 1904. Sixteen acres have been added, making it thirty-eight in all and a complete and entire change has been made. The plant today representing an expenditure of \$1,700,000. They have double-decked almost all of the space they occupied last year, which has been called the Babylonian Hanging Gardens, and which gives an increased capacity of over 70,000 people, and is at the same time a great protection against rain or the sun. These gardens will be covered with palms and shrubbery and flower beds. There will be a score of little tea houses among them, where geisha girls will serve tea and where everything will have a distinct Japanese atmosphere. It will be a restful place, where no selling of peanuts or candy or "spelling" for shows will be permitted. In one corner there will be a restaurant.



THE DURBAR PROCESSION AT NIGHT IN THE STREETS OF DELHI, LUNA PARK--THE ELEPHANTS ARE COVERED WITH THOUSANDS OF ELECTRIC LIGHTS ILLUMINATED FROM STORAGE BATTERIES CARRIED IN THE HOWDAHs.

Thompson & Dundy mean that it shall be a good restaurant. So they have given the privilege to a firm of caterers that does a great and high-priced business in a Wall street office building on very low terms, on condition that the contract may be broken on twenty-four hours' notice.

The greater part of the extra sixteen acres will be given up to a reproduction of a street in the ancient city of Delhi, India. The presence of 300 natives of India, including acrobats, snake charmers, yogi, and artisans of various crafts, will give local color. The visitors at this show will see, passing through the street, the largest elephant herd in the world, forty camels, and 100 horses decked out with silk, satin and gilt reproductions of the gorgeous trappings which the princes of India put upon their royal beasts in honor of their emperor at the world's most famous pageant, the "Durbar," in January, 1903. An illustration of the workings of Thompson's ingenuity is given by the fact that in the night parade the jewels on the elephant trappings will be represented by hundreds of miniature colored electric lamps, operated by storage batteries concealed in the howdahs. In one corner of the Streets of Delhi a large pool has been constructed, where twelve elephants will chute the chutes. This is a novel and sensational act that is known as the "Plunging Elephants."

There will be a three-ring aerial circus, with the rings suspended over the lagoon at the foot of the chutes, where a practically continuous free circus performance will be given day and night, at which all the newest and most sensational ring acts of Europe and America will be presented. "War is hell" will show real ships in real sea fights on real water. Another new feature will be "Fire and Flames." An entire city block has been erected, including a theater, schoolhouse, a tenement and a six-story hotel. The street in front of it is regularly paved. There are real street lamps on the corners. Real Brooklyn rapid transit trolley cars will run in front on real tracks. Greek fruit and peanut vendors will obstruct the curbs. Automobiles,

trucks and handsome cabs will run around the corner. Just before the fire show performance begins two men will march through the park with a banner thirty feet long on which this legend will be inscribed in very large letters: "The cry of fire will soon be raised. There is no cause for alarm. It is part of the performance." Then a puff of fire will come from a window in the block. A policeman will ring in an alarm. Four engines, with their hose carts, the water tower, a hook and ladder company and a search light, will dash up.

There will be rescues by scaling ladders. Women and children will jump into life-nets and the people in the theater will be rushed out to safety after Messrs. Thompson & Dundy's own patent plan for theatrical safeguards. The buildings, of course, are made of steel and asbestos and cannot burn down, but the audience across the street from the fire will think so. The fire department, which is under the command of Chief Henry W. McAdams, for twenty-one years chief instructor and drill master of the New York fire department, is always on duty and is one of Luna Park's many safeguards against fire. The park is equipped with salt water mains, which proved their efficiency when they were put at the city department's disposal during the great Coney Island fire last fall and enabled it to stop the fierce conflagration.

All of the old shows and attractions that demonstrated their popularity last summer will be at Luna Park again this year, including "A Trip to the Moon," chute the chutes, "Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea," the old mill, the infant incubators and the helter-skelter slide. The two new thrillers will be whirl the whirl and the circling swing.

Toward the end of last season an entirely new kind of people began to make their presence felt in the Coney Island crowds. They began to come down to Luna park on week days, until toward the last of the season the Saturday and Sunday receipts, large as they were, were hardly larger than those of the formerly despised slack

days. This meant that people were visiting the place who were so well off that they did not have to wait for Saturday for their spending money.

The running expenses of Luna Park for the coming season are figured at \$500,000. Thirty detectives with some extra men from the detective agencies and the city detective force have been employed to keep out thieves and improper persons and to maintain perfect order.

"We'll have people coming from further away to see Luna Park before we get through," says the always confident and always correct Dundy, "than they will go to see a world's fair. No world's fair can induce any sane showman to put up for a single season such an amusement plant as we have put up here. We're here to stay. We've got to make a reputation this summer that will keep men, women and children coming out here in 1905 and 1906 and so on indefinitely."

## Enoch Arden Variations

The story of Enoch Arden appeals strongly to the hearts of readers, and it is assumed that Tennyson foresaw what would actually happen should the shipwrecked sailor, returning after years of exile, discover his girl-wife to be now the contented spouse of another, naturally supposing her first husband to be dead. In the story Enoch gazed long at his early love through the window, then with great self-abnegation left her in her happiness (though he was inconsistent to make sure that she should know of his return and belated death). Everybody feels that Enoch did right in not intruding on the peaceful home.

Yet in practical life this is not always the way. At Stowe, Vt., a drama having the same elements ran differently. An Enoch Arden there returned after years of absence to find his spouse the wife of another man. What he did was to punch the new husband. Then the wife came to the aid of husband No. 2, and together they bundled the intruder into the street with the threat of a broken head should he return.